

Approved: July 10, 2013

Merrimack Agricultural Commission

Minutes

June 12, 2013

Chairman John Lastowka called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Cindy Warhola, Bob McCabe, Eber Currier, and Bess Parks.

Vanessa Ulrich from Hollis, accompanied by her daughter, spoke about a non-profit organization called Cultural Home State International, which involves people exchanges. Vanessa and her family presently have a young lady from Belgium living with them. She would like to have permission to set up a table at some of our Farmer's Markets to encourage others to take part in the program. The coordinator from Kittery, Maine would be present also to answer any questions our customers might have about this program. Bess Parks moved to allow CHI to do this, Bob McCabe seconded. Vote was 5-0-0.

Signup sheet was circulated for commissioners to sign up for coordinating weekly farm markets. Adam Jacobs from the Public Works Dept. showed Bob and John where to put the cones and signs the next morning at Highway barn. Adam, or another PW employee, will deliver them to the Tractor Supply F.M. site on Wednesday's where one of the commissioners or a vendor will set them up. Thanks again for the town's help. The Farmer's Market will be open every Wednesday from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. until September 18, 2013, weather permitting. Justin will get it on our local TV station.

Treasurer Bess Parks has not received any current figures so report remains the same for this month.

Community Gardens; Bob said 79 plots have been sold to 49 people, which means several people have more than one plot. There are two plots left. There is still too much ledge in two plots. We donated two plots to the Easter Seals program and the Pumpkin Man got a free one. Bob's son, Kyle, made a message board beside the gardens so gardener's can leave questions there to be answered by one of the Farmer's or the Agricultural Commission can leave information for the gardeners. Mulch and water are all good for use.

Green Energy Times; this is a weekly journal. It costs \$40.00 for an entry fee and will run for two months. John will get more information about this before our next meeting.

Pete Gagnon arrived and was given voting rights so we now have six members.

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The weekly Market Bulletin from the State had an ad in there for our Farmer's Market on the first of June.

Allen Lindahl's term expires on June 30, 2013 and he has too much work for him to renew right now. The information he shares about honey bees is invaluable. Thank you, Allen.

Some of our vendors are Lidgetop farms, Paradise Farms, Trombly Farms, Gunther's Goodies, J.L. Sweets, The Yankee Cheeseman, Gone Baking, Fresh Start Farm, and Laurel Hill J. &J.

Bob gave a report on Bug alerts. So many of them to watch for, White Apple Leaf Hopper, Plum Curculio, White Conifer, BMSB. San Jose Scale, the Clipper (in strawberries, blueberries, raspberries). And of course corn borers.

Minutes of May 8, 2013 were read and accepted with a couple of minor corrections. Cindy voted to accept and Bob seconded, Vote was 6-0-0.

John Lastowka is swamped with work right now so is not going to take the chairman's position again. Eber nominated Bob McCabe and Cindy seconded and Bob accepted. Vote was 5-1-0. Then Eber nominated John for vice-Chairman and Pete seconded and John accepted. Vote was 5-1-0.

Commissioner's comments: John offers our thanks to Town Mgr. Eileen Cabanel for helping us out on the set-up of the Farmer's Market on Wednesdays and storing the props for us at the Highway Barn. Eber spoke about the support the Conservation Commission has given to the Agricultural Commission. Their goals and visions include encouraging farmland. Bob spoke about the Public Forum on the Master Plan. The Agricultural Commission is on that plan. Best Management Practices (BMP) from the State of New Hampshire has no restrictions on Agriculture. Eber has a list of 46 farms in Merrimack and Bob is going to send a personal letter to each of them to try have more interest in people serving on the Agricultural Commission.

John adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Trudy Currier (acting secretary)